

March 12, 1951

"E"ORANDUM TO: Dr. Arthur S. Flemming

SUBJECT: Shortage of Language and Area Specialists

During the past few months, the critical importance of scientists and engineers to the national defense program has been widely recognized. As a result, studies are now going forward to determine more accurately our manpower requirements and resources in scientific fields, and provisions are being made for continued training and effective utilization of scientific and engineering personnel.

Unfortunately, no comparable emphasis has been given to our requirements and resources of manpower having other types of specialized knowledge to help the nation participate effectively in the conflict of ideas and non-military actions which are also of great importance to our national security.

One of our most critical manpower shortages at the present time is that of persons expert in the language, geography, economy, and psychology of the areas in which we must act to protect our national security. This shortage is extremely acute with respect to Asiatic areas. It is practically impossible to find Americans with a thorough knowledge of the Korean language and people; the situation is even worse as it relates to Burma, Thailand, Viet Nam, and Central Asia. Our manpower resources for understanding and dealing effectively with Middle Eastern countries are inadequate in the extreme.

Even with respect to Russia, our resources are below the danger point. Last year, for example, only seven Americans took Ph.D's in Russian language and literature, the field most necessary as a base for increasing our supply of Americans who are experts on Russia.

These shortages cannot be corrected quickly. Not only does the training required for language and area competence require several years--in many cases the materials for conducting such training either do not exist or are entirely inadequate. A short time ago, the Department of the Air Force sent a list of twenty-six languages to the American Council of Learned Societies requesting information on where Air Force personnel could be sent for training in these languages. The ACLS informed the Air Force that instruction is offered in not more than ten of the languages anywhere in the United States and that there are no basic materials available for teaching some eight or ten of them. For example, several English-foreign language dictionaries which were in production during World War II were discontinued at the end of the last war. (Burmese was one of these, and it is still in card-file form.)

There are now only eight or ten universities in the United States equipped to give advanced language and area training. Even these are staffed with a bare minimum of competent specialists, and some of these, having reserve status, are threatened with recall to active duty in the armed forces.

Many of the experts in this field are foreign born. Consequently, the difficulty

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of obtaining security clearance on them is a very serious obstacle to their employment within the government.

Few facts have been assembled regarding our existing supply of Americans having language and area competence. Equally few facts are known regarding our requirements for this type of specialized personnel. The only comprehensive requirements estimate which has been made is that of Dr. Mortimer Graves of the ACLS. Admitting that his estimates are to a very considerable degree arbitrary, Dr. Graves nevertheless bases his figures on his own knowledge and extensive contact with the departments of government using such personnel. His estimates of our minimum needs are as follows:

Australia-New Zealand	20	Mexico	50
Balkans	30	Moslem World	30
Brazil	30	Netherlands	10
Central Africa	20	Northern South America	30
Central America	50	Philippines	20
Central Asia	15	Polynesia	10
China	100	Portugal	20
Eastern Mediterranean	30	Russia	100
Eire	10	Scandinavia	20
France-Belgium	50	Siberia	10
Germany	50	South Africa	10
Great Britain	50	Southeast Asia	30
India	50	Southern South America	50
Iran	10	Spain	30
Italy	50	Turkey	15
Japan	30	West and North Slavs	30
Korea	20	West Coast of S. America	40
Malaysia	20	Western Mediterranean	20
Melanesia	10		

These estimated requirements total a mere 1200 Americans having language and area competence to service the agencies and enterprises through which the United States must exercise its role of world leadership.

Dr. Graves observes pointedly that "after all the forced draft of a total global war and a decade of worldwide activity, we are not equipped with even an approximation of this minimum."

In contrast with the bleak resource outlook in this highly important field, our requirements are already pressing and growing rapidly. As our broad security programs develop, need for specialists in foreign languages and cultures will be more urgently needed as advisors in policy formulation and execution, as administrators, as technicians in special problems, and as observers.

The agencies of government which are the principal users of manpower having language and area competence are: The Department of State (including both the Department and the Foreign Service Institute); the Department of Defense (including Army, Navy, and Air Force); Central Intelligence Agency; Economic Cooperation Administration. To a lesser extent other agencies require this type

of personnel. Among these are: Department of Commerce, Department of Labor, Library of Congress, and Federal Security Agency.

In addition to these needs, there is the problem of American staff for the U.N., and for its specialized agencies and missions. Undoubtedly, additional needs will develop in the economic and production planning agencies of NATO and in connection with the headquarters of General Eisenhower. As we move toward treaty arrangements with Germany and Japan, the possibility of a Pacific Pact, and participation in such enterprises as the Colombo Plan for development of Southeast Asia, even greater needs will develop for language and area specialists.

Requirements for such specialized personnel must include private agencies and companies also. There is not available even a rough estimate of these present and prospective requirements. However, they must be expected to become increasingly important.

The above data developed by the Manpower Office of the Resources Board point to several areas in which action appears to be needed. These areas are:

1. Assessment of our present resources in manpower, materials, and tools.
2. Development of more adequate data on requirements of manpower, materials, and tools.
3. More effective utilization of qualified personnel through measures designed to place them in employment where their skills can be used most effectively and their knowledge disseminated most widely in meeting both governmental and private needs.
4. The accumulation and servicing of materials in the language and area fields needed by these experts.
5. The development of teaching materials and techniques in the language and area training fields.
6. Development of new or improvement of existing facilities for training.
7. Acceleration of a program of language training to relieve broadly trained experts from routine work, such as translation.
8. Arranging for foreign-born experts to work upon open sources (perhaps in the Library of Congress) until security clearance on them has been obtained.
9. The encouragement of additional research in foreign cultures, particularly those about which we now know very little.

While the immediate problems indicated above are in process of solution, attention should be given to development of the number and kinds of experts in languages and cultures which the United States needs to sustain its position of world leadership. The expansion of American activities abroad will in itself increase the number of persons with firsthand experience in foreign areas. To be most

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valuable, however, this experience must be coupled with a systematic program of training through permanent institutes in area studies and integrated with such measures as the Fulbright Act, Smith-Mundt Act, and operations under Point Four. Considerable resources for a broadened program of training opportunities abroad may be found in Treasury surpluses of unconvertible currencies which could be appropriated for this purpose.

In addition to the governmental agencies having a direct interest in this problem, there are many private agencies which are concerned. Chief among them are the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Ford Foundation, and the universities which are currently offering training in this field. Any action taken therefore requires close coordination of a number of federal agencies and several private groups.

While each of the public and private agencies concerned is taking limited steps to meet its individual problems and responsibilities, there is serious lack of overall leadership and direction in dealing with the problem as a whole. Consequently, I would like to discuss with you various measures which might be taken to deal effectively with the language and area manpower shortage.

Robert L. Clark
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